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Zhuang et al.

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(54) **OPTICAL FILM AND LIQUID CRYSTAL DISPLAY**

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See application file for complete search history.

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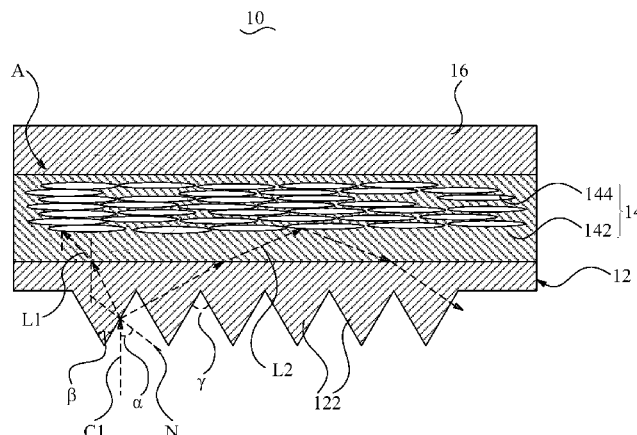
CPC **G02F 1/133606** (2013.01); **G02B 5/0247** (2013.01); **G02B 5/045** (2013.01); **G02B 5/3033** (2013.01); **G02B 5/3066** (2013.01); **G02B 6/00** (2013.01); **G02B 27/285** (2013.01);

(57)

ABSTRACT

An optical film includes a first optical layer and a second optical layer. The first optical layer is disposed above the second optical layer. The second optical layer is a composite material layer, which includes a base material and a doping layer disposed in the base material. The optical film recycles an exterior light source and improves the utilization rate of the light source.

19 Claims, 4 Drawing Sheets



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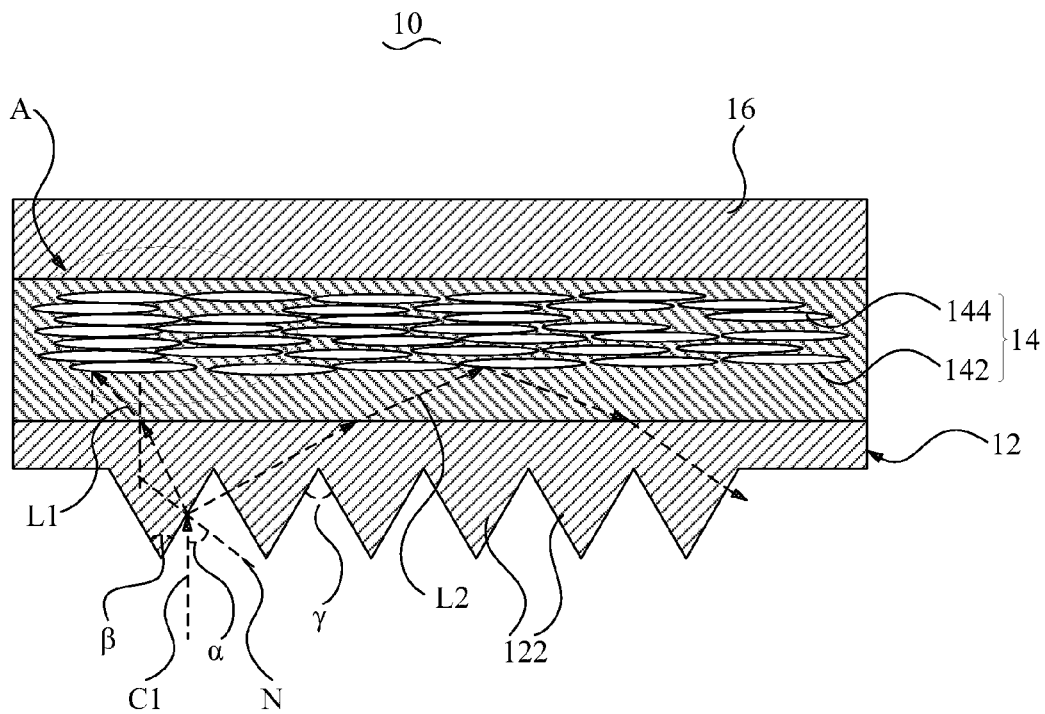


FIG. 1

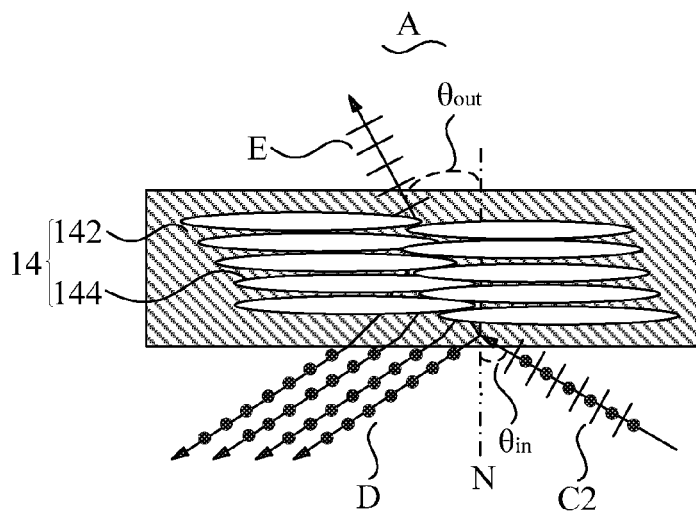


FIG. 2

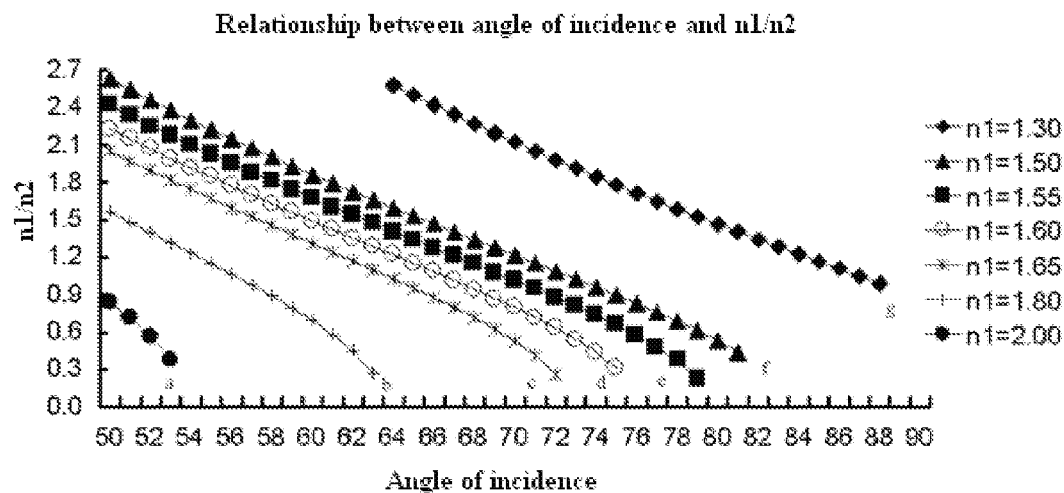


FIG. 3

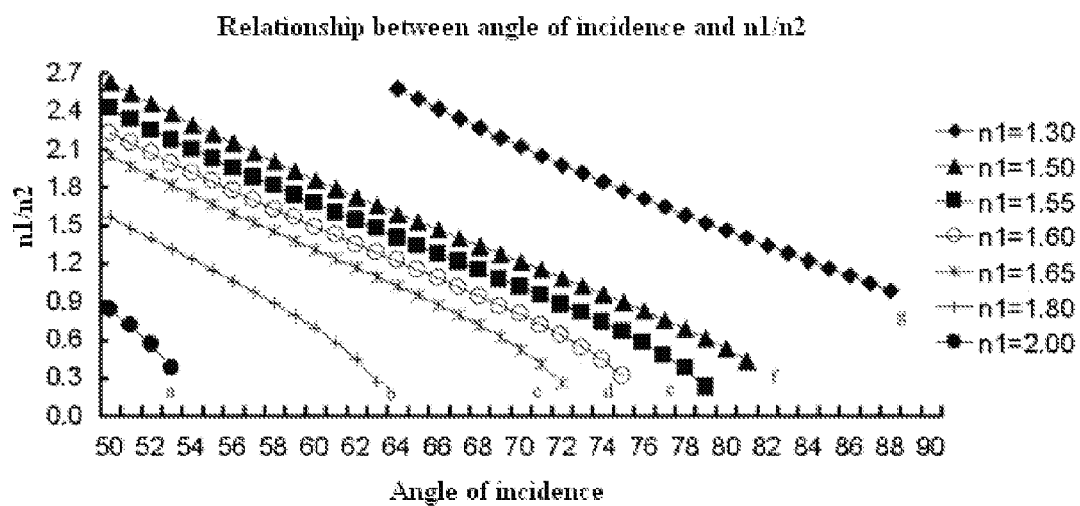


FIG. 4

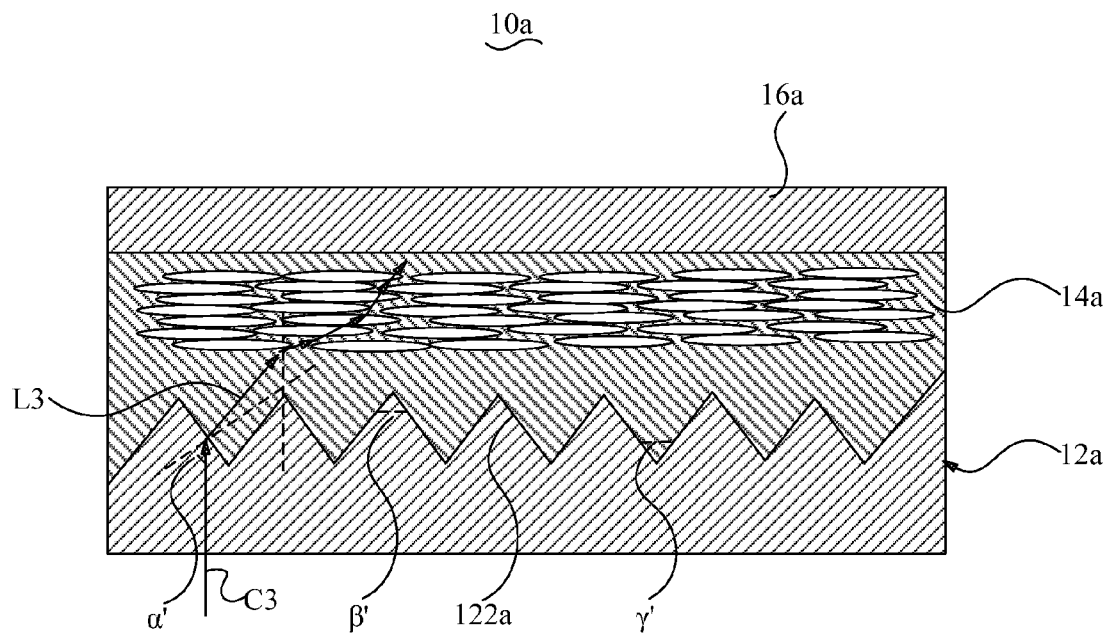


FIG. 5

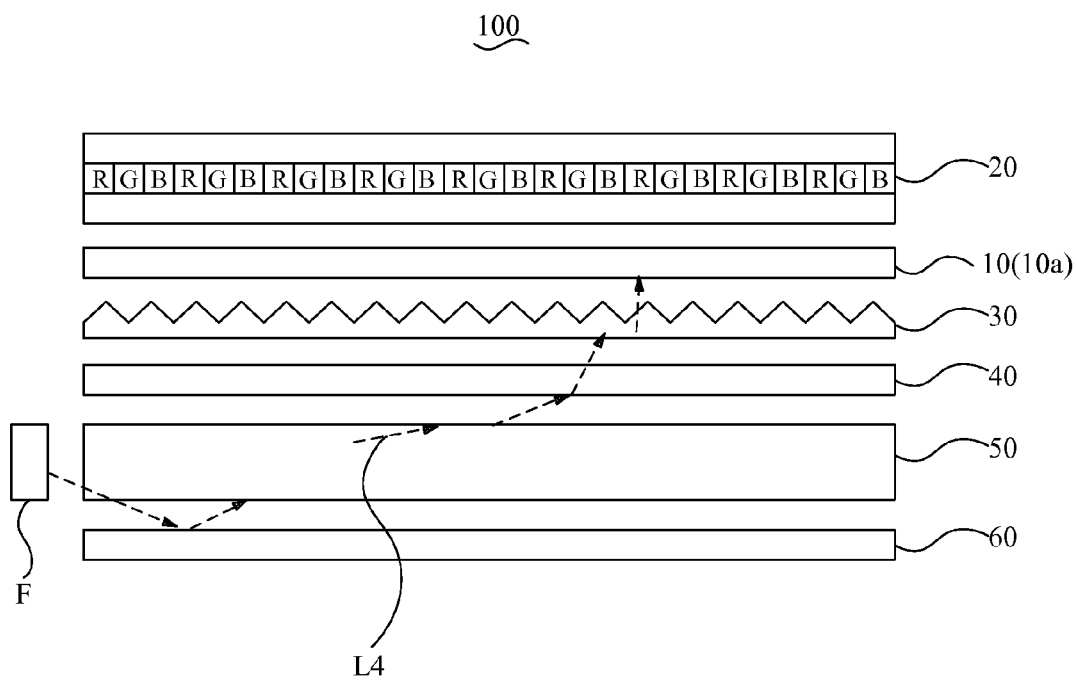


FIG. 6

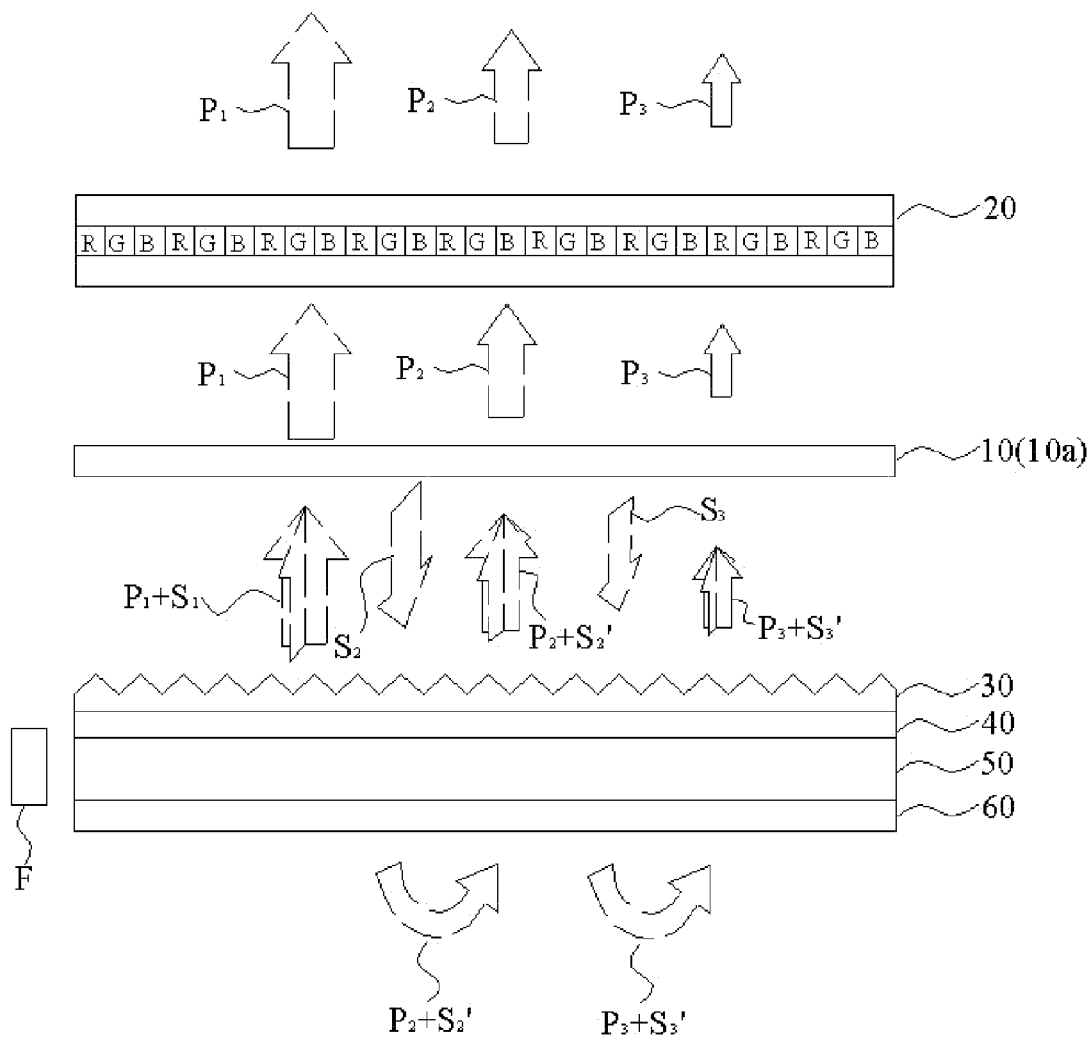


FIG. 7

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OPTICAL FILM AND LIQUID CRYSTAL DISPLAY

CROSS-REFERENCES TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

The present application claims the benefit of priority to Chinese Patent Application No. 201310247619.8, entitled "OPTICAL FILM AND LIQUID CRYSTAL DISPLAY", filed with the Chinese Patent Office on Jun. 20, 2013, the content of which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to the liquid crystal display field, and in particular to an optical film and a liquid crystal display adopting the optical film.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The light produced by a liquid crystal display backlight is natural light, which consists of P-polarized light and S-polarized light which are perpendicular to each other in the polarization direction. The natural light is generally coupled by a light guide plate and reaches a polarizer, however, usually less than half of the light energy emitted by the backlight passes through the liquid crystal display and at least half of the light energy is consumed because only the polarized light with the polarization direction parallel to the light-passing direction of the polarizer passes through the polarizer while the polarized light with the polarization direction perpendicular to the light-passing direction of the polarizer is totally absorbed and consumed. Therefore, the light emitted by the backlight cannot be fully utilized, and the utilization rate of the light is low.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides an optical film and a liquid crystal display including the optical film, which can avoid the above mentioned problems and the disadvantages in the prior art.

Embodiments of the present invention provide technical solutions addressing the problems related with prior art. One inventive aspect of the present invention is an optical film.

In an embodiment, the optical film includes a first optical layer and a second optical layer, the first optical layer being above the second optical layer. The second optical layer is a composite material layer, which includes a base material and a doping layer in the base material.

Another inventive aspect of the application is a liquid crystal display.

In an embodiment, the liquid crystal display includes a liquid crystal display panel, a backlight, and an optical film. The liquid crystal display panel is the outmost layer of the display. The optical film includes a first optical layer and a second optical layer, the first optical layer being above the second optical layer. The second optical layer is a composite material layer, which includes a base material and a doping layer in the base material.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a sectional diagram of an optical film according to a first embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 2 is a schematic enlarged diagram of area A in FIG. 1.

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FIG. 3 is a graph, which shows curves representing the relation between an angle of incidence and a ratio of a refractive index of a first optical layer to a refractive index of a second optical layer according to the first embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 4 is another graph, which shows curves representing the relation between the angle of incidence and a ratio of a refractive index of the first optical layer to a refractive index of the second optical layer according to the first embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 5 is a sectional diagram of an optical film according to a second embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 6 is a schematic exploded diagram of a liquid crystal display according to embodiments of the invention.

FIG. 7 is a schematic diagram showing that a light resource is utilized in the liquid crystal display according to embodiments of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

FIG. 1 and FIG. 2 show an optical film 10 according to the first embodiment of the invention. The optical film 10 includes a first optical layer 12, a second optical layer 14 and a third optical layer 16.

As shown in FIG. 1, the first optical layer 12 is disposed at the bottom of the optical film 10. The first optical layer 12 is a prism sheet including a plurality of prisms 122. The apex angle (vertex) of each prism 122 is denoted as γ , which bulges outward from the outside of the optical film 10, i.e., the bulging direction is pointing away from the second optical layer 14. In the incident light C_1 , there is a portion of incident light C_1 in accordance with the light-passing direction of the optical film 10 that enters the optical film at a Brewster angle, with an angle of incidence α at the first optical layer 12. The angle of incidence α , which is an angle between the incident light C_1 and a normal N , is in a range of $52.2^\circ \leq \alpha < 90^\circ$ degrees. The apex angle (vertex) β of each prism 122 is set as: $\beta = 180^\circ - 2\alpha$. An angle γ formed between the intersecting sides of two adjacent prisms 122 is set equal to α , that is to say, $\alpha = \gamma$. Another portion of the incident light C_1 which is perpendicular to the light-passing direction of the optical film 10 propagates forward along an optical path L_2 , reaching the second optical layer 14 and is then reflected and outgoes from the optical film 10. The first optical film 12 is an organic thin film, e.g., Polyethylene terephthalate (PET) and Polycarbonate (PC). The refractive index n_1 of the first optical layer 12 ranges from 1.3 to 1.8.

The second optical layer 14 is disposed in the middle of the optical film 10. The second optical layer 14 is a composite material including a base material 142 and a doping layer 144. The doping layer 144 includes multiple layers constructed by bubbles. Each bubble is elongated and is filled with air, CO_2 or an inert gas. The refractive index n_{20} of the bubble is smaller than the refractive index n_1 of the first optical layer 12 and the refractive index n_2 of the base material 142. Manufacturing processes of the second optical layer 14 may include, but are not restricted to stretching, coating, colloidal film and foaming. Taking the stretching process as an example, firstly the base material 142 is stretched, then an inert gas is filled in the base material 142 to generate bubbles in the base material 142. The multiple bubble layers, which are formed by the bubbles and fit closely to each other, fill in the base material 142. It can be understood that an optical effect caused by the bubble layers is equivalent to multiple glass layers that are arranged closely one above another. An emerging light, which finally outgoes from the optical film 10 (10a) by reflections and refractions through the multiple

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bubble layers, is a completely linearly polarized light if the angle of incidence at the optical film 10 is the Brewster angle according to the pile-of-plates polarization principle.

Similar to the first optical layer 12, the base material 142 of the second optical layer 14 is an organic thin film, such as Polyethylene terephthalate (PET) or Polycarbonate (PC). The refractive index n_2 of the base material 142 in the second optical layer ranges from 1.3 to 1.8.

SiO_2 particles may be disposed in the bubbles of the doping layer 144. The refractive index of SiO_2 is equal to or smaller than 1.2. Alternatively, a plurality of SiO_2 particles are adopted in the doping layer 144 to replace the bubble layer and fill in the base material 142 by coating of colloidal sol. It is not restricted to adopt the bubbles or the SiO_2 particles according to the Brewster principle. The effect of the Brewster polarization can be implemented as long as the refractive index n_{20} is smaller than the refractive index n_1 of the first optical layer 12 and the refractive index n_2 of the base material 142 in the second optical layer.

FIG. 2 is a schematic enlarged diagram of area A in FIG. 1. When an incident light C_2 reaches the second optical layer 14, in the incident light C_2 , a portion of which in accordance with the light-passing direction of the optical film 10 enters the doping layer 144 with an angle of incidence θ_{in} (here the optical path of the incident light C_2 is equivalent to the optical path L_1 in FIG. 1). Here the relationship among the angle of incidence θ_{in} , the refractive index n_2 of the base material 142 of the second optical layer and the refractive index n_{20} of the doping layer 144 is given as:

$$\theta_{in} = \arctan\left(\frac{n_{20}}{n_2}\right),$$

and the relationship among an emergence angle θ_{out} , the refractive index n_2 of the base material 142 of the second optical layer and the refractive index n_{20} of the doping layer 144 is given as:

$$\theta_{out} = \arctan\left(\frac{n_2}{n_{20}}\right).$$

Another portion of the incident light perpendicular to the light-passing direction of the optical film 10 is reflected by the doping layer 144 and outgoes from the optical film 10, and a reflection light D (equivalent to the optical path L_2 in FIG. 1) is generated.

The third optical layer 16 is disposed on the top surface of the optical film 10. The third optical layer is a polarizer, which has the same structure and function as conventional polarizers, is not restricted to the absorption-type polarizer, or the reflection-type polarizer, and the like. The refractive index n_3 of the third optical layer 16 ranges from 1.3 to 1.8 according to the first embodiment.

The whole thickness of the optical film 10 is equal to or greater than 0.03 mm according to an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 3 and FIG. 4 illustrate an ideal value of the angle of incidence α in the case where the refractive index n_1 of the first optical layer 12 and the refractive index n_2 of the base material 142 of the second optical layer are both in a range from 1.3 to 1.8. In order to ensure that the incident light enters the optical film 10 at the Brewster angle, the angle of incidence α , the refractive index n_0 of the air, the refractive index n_1 of the first optical layer, the refractive index n_2 of the

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second optical layer and the refractive index n_{20} of the doping layer 144 satisfy the following formula:

$$\arcsin\left(\frac{n_1}{n_2} \sin\left(\alpha - \arcsin\left(\frac{n_0}{n_1} \sin\alpha\right)\right)\right) = \arcsin\left(\frac{n_{20}}{n_2}\right).$$

As shown in FIG. 3, the seven curves a, b, c, d, e, f and g represent respectively the changes of the angle of incidence α and the ratio of n_1/n_2 as n_1 changes. In order to satisfy the formula

$$\arcsin\left(\frac{n_1}{n_2} \sin\left(\alpha - \arcsin\left(\frac{n_0}{n_1} \sin\alpha\right)\right)\right) = \arcsin\left(\frac{n_{20}}{n_2}\right),$$

the angle of incidence α increases correspondingly as n_1/n_2 decreases (n_2 increases) in the case where n_1 is a constant, n_1/n_2 decreases as n_1 increases in the case where the angle of incidence α is a constant, or the angle of incidence α increases as n_1 decreases in the case where n_1/n_2 is a constant.

As shown in FIG. 4, the refractive index n_1 of the first optical layer 12 and the refractive index n_2 of the second optical layer 14 are usually equal to or larger than 1.0 and the range of the refractive index of known materials suitable for the optical layers ranges from 1.3 to 1.8, the value of n_1/n_2 ranges from 0.72 to 1.38 consequently. The formula

$$\arcsin\left(\frac{n_1}{n_2} \sin\left(\alpha - \arcsin\left(\frac{n_0}{n_1} \sin\alpha\right)\right)\right) = \arcsin\left(\frac{n_{20}}{n_2}\right)$$

is satisfied in shadow regions of FIG. 4 in the case where the refractive index n_1 of the first optical layer and the refractive index n_2 of the second optical layer range from 1.3 to 1.8, and in this case the minimum value of the angle of incidence α is 52.2 degree, $n_1=1.80$, and $n_1/n_2=1.38$.

FIG. 5 illustrates an optical film 10a according to a second embodiment of the invention. The optical film 10a includes a first optical layer 12a, a second optical layer 14a and a third optical layer 16a.

The first optical layer 12a is disposed at the bottom of the optical film 10a. The first optical layer 12a is a prism sheet including a plurality of prisms 122a. The apex angle (vertex) of each prism 122a is denoted as β' , which faces the inner side of the optical film 10a, that is to say, faces the second optical layer 14a. Each prism 122a of the first optical layer 12a fits the second optical layer 14a. The relationships among an angle of incidence α' , the point angle β' of the prism 122a and an angle γ' between the bottoms of two adjacent prisms 122a are given as: $\beta'=180^\circ-2\alpha'$, $\alpha'=\gamma'$ as a light C_3 reaches the optical film 10a.

The relationship of the angle of incidence α' , the refractive index n_1' of the first optical layer 12a, the refractive index n_2' of the base material 142a of the second optical layer and a refractive index n_{20}' of the doping layer 144a of the second optical layer is given as:

$$\arcsin\left(\frac{n_2'}{n_1'} \sin\alpha'\right) - \alpha' = \arcsin\left(\frac{n_{20}'}{n_2'}\right)$$

in the case where the refractive index n_1' of the first optical layer 12a is greater than the refractive index n_2' of the base

material **142a** in the second optical layer and the light C_3 reaches the second optical layer **14a** through the first optical layer **12a**.

The relationship of the angle of incidence α' , the refractive index n_1' of the first optical layer **12a**, the refractive index n_2' of the second optical layer base material **142a** and the refractive index n_{20}' of the doping layer **144a** of the second optical layer is:

$$\alpha' - \arcsin\left(\frac{n_2'}{n_1'} \sin \alpha'\right) = \arcsin\left(\frac{n_{20}'}{n_2'}\right)$$

in the case where the refractive index n_1' of the first optical layer **12a** is smaller than the refractive index n_2' of the base material **142a** of the second optical layer and the light C_3 reaches the second optical layer **14a** through the first optical layer **12a**.

The materials and the refractive indexes of the first optical layer **12a**, the second optical layer **14a** and the third optical layer **16a** are the same as the corresponding optical layers in the first embodiment, hence they are not described here.

The working principle in the second embodiment of the invention is the same as that of the optical film **10** according to the first embodiment. After the light C_3 reaches the optical film **10a**, polarized light in the light C_3 in accordance with the light-passing direction of the optical film **10a** outgoes from the optical film **10a** along the optical path L_3 , and polarized light in the light C_3 perpendicular to the light-passing direction of the optical film **10a** is reflected outward by the second optical layer **14a** of the optical film **10a** (the reflection optical path is not shown in FIG. 5).

In the optical film **10 (10a)** illustrated in embodiments of the present invention, the first optical layer **12 (12a)**, the second optical layer **14 (14a)** and the third optical layer **16 (16a)** are laminated as an integrity. Alternatively, the optical film **10 (10a)** may be arranged with a separable structure, e.g. the first optical layer **12 (12a)** is laminated with the second optical layer **14 (14a)**, and the third optical layer **16 (16a)** is separated from the optical film **10 (10a)**; or the three optical layers are respectively separated from each other.

The optical film **10 (10a)** according to the first or second embodiment of the invention includes three optical layers. The doping layer **144 (144a)** in the second optical layer **14 (14a)** comprises multiple bubble layers. The emerging light outgoes from the optical film **10 (10a)** is a completely linearly polarized light by the reflections and refractions through the multiple bubble layers if the light enters the optical film **10 (10a)** at the Brewster angle.

Embodiments of the present invention also provide a liquid crystal display **100** including the optical film **10 (10a)**. FIG. 6 is a schematic exploded diagram of the liquid crystal display **100**. The liquid crystal display **100** includes an optical film **10 (10a)**, a liquid crystal display panel **20** and a backlight.

The liquid crystal display panel **20** is the outmost layer of the display **100**. The optical film **10 (10a)** is disposed between the liquid crystal display panel **20** and the backlight. The backlight includes a prism sheet **30**, a diffusion sheet **40**, a light guide plate **50** and a reflective sheet **60** arranged under the optical film **10 (10a)** in sequence, and a light source **F**.

The reflective sheet **60** is adapted to reflect light emitted from the light source **F** and the light guide plate **50**, hence, the light source **F** is fully utilized. A micro-structure (not shown in FIG. 6) is provided on the light guide plate **50**. The micro-structure is adapted to convert a point light source and a line light source emitted from the light source **F** into an area light

source. The diffusion sheet **40** can diffuse the light and enhance the light distribution uniformity, thus grid points or defects possibly existed on the LCD panel **20** can be shielded. The optical film **10 (10a)** is adapted to straighten the light emerging from the backlight, so an optical path L_4 is gathered and gained axially, thus the brightness of the liquid crystal display **100** is enhanced.

FIG. 7 is a schematic diagram showing that the light resource **F** is fully utilized in the liquid crystal display **100** according to the present invention. The light source **F** is divided into two kinds of polarized light, P_1 and S_1 , which are perpendicular to each other. The polarized light P_1 is in accordance with the light-passing direction of the optical film **10 (10a)**, so the polarized light P_1 is able to pass through the optical film **10 (10a)**. The polarized light S_1 is reflected by the optical film **10 (10a)** and then a polarized light S_2 is generated. S_2 is diffused by the various layers of the backlight (the prism sheet **30**, the diffusion sheet **40**, the light guide plate **50** and the reflective sheet **60**) and converted into natural light, which combines with the light source produced by the light source **F** to form the polarized light P_2 and S_2' . The polarized light P_2 enters and passes through the optical film **10 (10a)** and finally emerges from the liquid crystal display panel **10**. Since the polarized light S_2' is not in accordance with the light-passing direction of the optical film **10 (10a)**, it is reflected out of the optical film **10 (10a)** and converted into a polarized light S_3 . S_3 is diffused by the various layers of the backlight (the prism sheet **30**, the diffusion sheet **40**, the light guide plate **50** and the reflective sheet **60**) and converted into natural light, which combines with the light source produced by the light source **F** to form the polarization light P_3 and S_3' . The polarized light P_3 passes through the optical film **10 (10a)** and finally outgoes from the liquid crystal display panel **10**. Light penetration is implemented repeatedly by recycling the light emitted from the light source **F**, hence the light source **F** is fully used and the overall brightness of the liquid crystal display **100** is enhanced.

The optical film **10 (10a)** is disposed between the liquid crystal display panel **10** and the backlight in the liquid crystal display **100** according to embodiments of the present invention. Therefore, after the light (natural light) emitted from the light source **F** reaches the optical film **10 (10a)**, the light parallel to the light-passing direction of the optical film **10 (10a)** enters the optical film **10 (10a)** at the Brewster angle, outgoes from the liquid crystal display panel **10** through multiple refraction of the second optical layer **14 (14a)**; while the light perpendicular to the light-passing direction of the optical film **10 (10a)** is reflected by the second optical layer **14 (14a)** for a plurality of times and converted into natural light by the diffusion of each layer of the backlight (the prism sheet **30**, the diffusion sheet **40**, the light guide plate **50** and the reflective sheet **60**), which combines with the light produced by the light source **F** to reach the optical film **10 (10a)**. In such a recycle, the light emitted from the backlight is straightened by the optical film **10 (10a)**, the optical path is gathered and gained axially, thus the utilization rate of the light source **F** is improved and the brightness of the liquid crystal display **100** is enhanced.

Obviously, various changes and modifications can be made to embodiments of the present invention by those skilled in the art without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. Hence, the invention also intends to include those changes and modifications.

What is claimed is:

1. An optical film, comprising a first optical layer and a second optical layer, wherein

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the first optical layer is disposed under the second optical layer and comprises a prism bulging away from the second optical layer;

the second optical layer is a composite material layer comprising a base material and a doping layer in the base material.

2. The optical film according to claim 1, wherein the doping layer comprises at least one elongated bubble.

3. The optical film according to claim 2, wherein the doping layer comprises a plurality of layers formed by the at least one elongated bubble.

4. The optical film according to claim 2, wherein the bubble comprises air or CO₂.

5. The optical film according to claim 2, wherein the bubble further comprises SiO₂ particles.

6. The optical film according to claim 1, wherein the doping layer comprises at least one particle having a refractive index that is smaller than a refractive index of the first optical layer and a refractive index of the base material in the second optical layer.

7. The optical film according to claim 6, wherein the doping layer comprises a plurality of layers formed by the at least one particle.

8. The optical film according to claim 7, wherein the particle is an SiO₂ particle.

9. The optical film according to claim 1, wherein the first optical layer is a prism sheet comprising a plurality of prisms, and apex angles (vertices) of the plurality of prisms bulge outward from the outside of the optical film.

10. The optical film according to claim 9, wherein the optical film further comprises a third optical layer, third optical layer being a polarizer and disposed on the top surface of the second optical layer.

11. The optical film according to claim 10, wherein the first optical layer, the base material of the second optical layer, and the third optical layer each have a refractive index in a range from 1.3 to 1.8.

12. The optical film according to claim 9, wherein an angle of incidence α at an apex angle (vertex) of each of the plural-

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ity of prisms is in a range of 52.2 degrees $\leq \alpha < 90$ degrees, and an apex angle (vertex) β satisfies the relation $\beta = 180^\circ - 2\alpha$.

13. The optical film according to claim 12, wherein an angle γ formed between intersecting sides of two adjacent prisms of the first optical layer is equal to the angle of incidence α .

14. The optical film according to claim 1, wherein the first optical layer is a prism sheet comprising a plurality of prisms, and apex angles (vertices) of the prisms face an inner side of the optical film.

15. The optical film according to claim 14, wherein the optical film further comprises a third optical layer, is the third optical layer being a polarizer and disposed on the top surface of the second optical layer.

16. The optical film according to claim 15, wherein the first optical layer, the base material of the second optical layer, and the third optical layer each have a refractive index in a range from 1.3 to 1.8.

17. The optical film according to claim 16, wherein the doping layer in the second optical layer has a refractive index equal to or smaller than 1.2.

18. The optical film according to claim 17, wherein the optical film has a thickness equal to or greater than 0.03 mm.

19. A liquid crystal display, comprising a liquid crystal display panel, a backlight, and the optical film, the liquid crystal display panel being the outmost layer of the liquid crystal display, and the optical film being provided between the liquid crystal display panel and the backlight, the optical film comprising a first optical layer and a second optical layer, wherein

the first optical layer is disposed under the second optical layer and comprises a prism bulging away from the second optical layer,

the second optical layer is a composite material layer comprising a base material and a doping layer in the base material.

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